

SY 2021-22 LEA Health and Safety Plans

LEA Name: District of Columbia Public Schools

LEA Contact: Maggie Thomas

LEA Type: Pre-K;Elementary;Middle School;High School

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Background and Purpose

[OSSE's Health and Safety Guidance for Schools](#) is issued for LEAs and private, parochial and independent schools (schools). LEAs and schools must develop and submit to OSSE comprehensive health and safety plans. This plan is intended to provide the public with information on how the LEA will support the safe reopening and operation of school buildings, including guidelines on masking, social distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, and appropriate response to a positive COVID-19 case.

OSSE reviewed each LEA's responses to the questions for clarity, completeness, and compliance with the DC Health and OSSE health and safety guidance for schools and provided feedback to the LEA. Before publication, LEA's were given the opportunity to revise their responses based on OSSE's feedback. LEAs and schools are responsible for incorporating additional or updated public health guidance into their policies and procedures throughout the school year as such guidance is released.

Face Masks

1. Provide the LEA's plan to comply with the requirements to:

- **a. except for specific circumstances (e.g., while eating) articulated in OSSE's guidance, all students, staff and visitors, including those who are fully vaccinated, must wear non-medical face coverings or face masks at all times while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. masks must be worn correctly.**

DCPS policy for SY21-22 requires that all staff, students, and visitors wear a mask while on school grounds. Notable exceptions include while eating, drinking, or napping, in the case of our early childhood students. Those unable to wear a mask related to a medical condition will submit a request for a mask waiver, which is reviewed by the DCPS Student Health Team.

Students, staff, and visitors may elect to wear a non-medical face covering or mask from home. However, if they do not arrive with the face covering or mask, they will be provided with a face mask during the arrival process. Additional face masks will be available throughout the building and in classrooms.

The Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) conducts bi-weekly school walks to assess several pieces of compliance and building safety. As part of these walks, a review of appropriate mask use will be included and follow-up will be conducted as needed.

2. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures in the event that a student, staff member, or visitor is unable or unwilling to wear a face mask at all times.

In the event a student, staff, or visitor is not able to wear a face mask, they will need to complete the mask waiver and appropriate accommodations will be made.

3. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to support physical distancing between individuals and within and across groups, including in classrooms, common spaces, during arrival and dismissal procedures, and during extracurricular activities.

Every effort will be made to support social distancing while in the school building. Within the classroom, desks and tables will face the same direction to the extent feasible.

Students are to be separated to the extent feasible, but there is no minimum distance requirement between students. To the extent feasible, 6ft spacing is to be maintained between adults and students. Additionally, to the extent feasible, 6ft spacing in between adults and other adults should be maintained.

4. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures regarding the use of cohorts for students and/or staff, including steps to minimize interactions between cohorts, as applicable.

Classes should be scheduled to ensure the lowest number of students per room possible and classroom interaction is to be limited to the extent feasible. DC Health shared updated COVID-19 guidelines for schools in May 2021 which emphasized the benefits of in-person learning and the importance of prioritizing in-person learning when developing updated COVID-19 health and safety recommendations. In line with that priority, there are no cohort limits in place for SY21-22, which will allow for an in-person learning return for all students.

5. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to support handwashing and respiratory etiquette including frequent, proper handwashing strategies and encouraging covering coughs and sneezes.

DCPS understands the important role that handwashing and respiratory etiquette play in keeping our staff, students, and visitors safe. DCPS will ensure operational hand sinks with complete soap and hand drying options available. In locations where handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer will be placed. Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and throughout hallways and other shared spaces.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will continue to be included in curriculum development to reinforce these practices with students.

6. Provide the LEA's plan to make available adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues) to support healthy hygiene practices including, as relevant, in classrooms, bathrooms, offices and common spaces.

DCPS will continue to coordinate with the DC Government Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) to procure additional supplies to support building safety. Schools receive delivery of sanitation items on a monthly basis and more frequently when needed. OCOO coordinates directly with Operations Designees at each school to evaluate inventory levels and coordinate deliveries. Custodial teams at each school complete weekly inventory to ensure levels are sufficient to support a clean environment.

7. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to acquire, distribute and support the appropriate use of PPE including gowns/coveralls, gloves, surgical masks, eye protection (face shield or goggles) and N95 masks, as relevant and necessary.

DCPS continues to coordinate with DC Government OCP and their PPE experts. The PPE Policy for SY21-22 outlines the below PPE allocations:

- All staff, students, and visitors receive daily face masks
- Staff at an increased risk for exposure receive daily face masks and gloves.
- Staff at an increased risk for exposure includes custodial teams, contracted medical staff, related service providers, staff in special education self-contained classrooms, staff diapering students, and staff conducting health screenings.
- Staff overseeing the Health Isolation Room receive face masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields.
- All schools will continue to receive supply of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.

In their weekly inventory, the custodial team also takes PPE inventory and communicates supply concerns. A monthly PPE delivery is coordinated with all schools.

Maintain Clean and Healthy Facilities

8. Provide the LEA's schedule for routine cleaning of rooms, surfaces and objects, including high touch objects and surfaces (e.g., pens, keyboards, elevator buttons, light switches, handles, stair rails, faucets, phones, doorknobs, grab bars on playgrounds).

Enhanced cleaning shall continue throughout the day for high-touch surfaces; however, there is no requirement for enhanced cleaning between cohort use of a space. Deep cleaning shall be conducted after suspected or reported COVID-19 case.

9. Provide the LEA's cleaning and disinfecting protocols in the event that (1) a student, staff member, or visitor develops symptoms of possible COVID-19 while in the school; or (2) if the school is notified that a student, staff member or visitor who tested positive has been in the school.

In the event of a suspected or reported COVID-19 case, DCPS follows Deep Cleaning guidelines, including cleaning of all vertical and horizontal surfaces in the school building.

In cleaning and disinfecting DCPS adheres to guidance from the following sources:

- [OCA Guidance Memo on Cleaning Protocols](#)
- [CDC Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance](#)
- [DGS Cleaning Guidance](#)

10. Provide the LEA's plan to make available sufficient and appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies.

Please see above for DCPS' inventory management and allocation process related to PPE and supply delivery. Gloves will be allocated to staff at increased risk for exposure, which includes staff who are cleaning and disinfecting. Deliveries will occur monthly. Weekly inventory conducted by custodial teams will flag any concerns with low inventory and trigger a delivery.

11. Provide the LEA's plan to perform necessary maintenance to ventilation and water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) so that they are ready for use and occupancy and are adequately maintained throughout the operating period.

DCPS complies with all ventilation and water system expectations. All of our buildings have been open and operational since February 2021. Each building will continue to remain open throughout the summer months to support Summer Acceleration Academy Programming.

Response to a Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Case

12. Describe the LEA's policies and procedures to:

- **a. Comply with the requirement to not admit or to dismiss any student, staff member or visitor who is COVID-19 positive or otherwise meets criteria for exclusion, per OSSE's guidance; and**
- **b. Dismiss any individual or cohort that is potentially exposed to COVID-19 within the school setting.**

To ensure that all persons entering our school are free of COVID-related symptoms and/or have not been in proximity of persons who are COVID positive, DCPS utilizes the "Ask, Ask, Look" protocol recommended by DC Health and OSSE to support daily screening for staff and students. Families can administer the protocol prior to students arriving at schools or the protocol will be administered by health services staff at the building upon arrival. Only persons that pass the Ask, Ask, Look protocol are eligible for admission into a DCPS school. If a student develops COVID related symptoms during the day, they must be assessed by the school nurse and follow guidance related to that assessment. If a staff member develops COVID related symptoms during the school day, they must report that information to their principal and/or COVID POC and as appropriate, leave the school, and follow up with their health care provider. Based on receipt of a positive COVID test, DCPS follows the protocol developed in collaboration with DC Health for identifying close contacts and follow-up with notification for quarantine. The district's COVID reporting protocol can be found at the district's website:

13. Provide the LEA's plan to comply with the requirements to:

- **a. Identify a staff member as the COVID-19 point of contact (POC) to whom families, staff, contractors and vendors should report a positive case of COVID-19 and who is responsible for reporting positive cases of COVID-19 to DC Health;**
- **b. Report any applicable positive COVID-19 case in a student, staff member or essential visitor to DC Health on the same day the school is notified;**
- **c. Not exclude students or staff with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19-like symptoms on the basis of those specific symptoms, if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are not due to COVID-19.**

As part of its COVID Protocol, each school is required to designate a COVID POC to be trained in accordance with the DCPS School Health Guidance to be able to document COVID-related incidents in the district's IRT (Incident Reporting Tool). Once a COVID-related incident is entered into the IRT, the Health Services team contacts the school-based COVID POC and support with the reporting on the incident to DC Health on the same day that the school is notified. Any student or staff member that has a pre-existing condition that presents with a specific COVID-19 symptom is required to provide documentation to the school nurse (student) or principal (staff). The district's COVID reporting protocol can be found at the district's website:

<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/response/>

14. Provide the LEA's procedures to support DC Health with contact tracing in the event of a positive case of COVID-19.

DCPS Health Services team notifies DC Health of any COVID-19 positive case that occurs in a DCPS school and works collaboratively with the school and DC Health to identify and notify close contacts of quarantine requirements.

15. Describe how the LEA will notify the school community, as appropriate, of the positive case and corresponding actions taken by the LEA.

DCPS has a robust protocol for notifying the school community of COVID positive cases. This includes a set of letter templates developed in collaboration with the DCPS Communications' team that allow schools to be very nuanced and timely in notifying their school community about COVID positive cases. Once a COVID positive case is confirmed, the DCPS Communications and Health Services teams work with the school leader to get notification out to the impact staff/students and to the broader community. The district's COVID reporting protocol for providing notification for positive COVID cases can be found at the district's website:

<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com>.

COVID-19 Testing and Vaccines

16. If applicable, describe the LEA's current or planned COVID-19 testing protocol for symptomatic and/or asymptomatic students and/or staff, including steps the LEA will take to encourage participation in the testing program. Please include the LEA's plan to ensure that results of such testing programs are reported to DC Health per DC Health's COVID-19 reporting requirements: dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements.

Currently, DC Health oversees the DCPS symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID testing programs. Both programs are administered by the school nurse. For symptomatic testing, the Patient Care Technician is responsible for escorting any COVID symptomatic student to the Health Isolation Room, where the school nurse will conduct a health assessment to determine the need for COVID testing. For asymptomatic COVID

testing, the school nurse tests a random sample of students with signed consent forms equally to as close to 10% of the schools' enrollment as possible. DC Health manages the COVID testing program and has direct access to the results. DC Health supports DCPS and schools with the implementation of notification and other COVID procedures when a positive case occurs. The district's asymptomatic and symptomatic testing procedures can be found at the district's website: <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/response/>

17. Provide the LEA's plans to support COVID-19 vaccination of staff and students, as eligible, including efforts to encourage participation in public and community-based vaccination opportunities.

In addition to hosting COVID-19 vaccination clinics in our schools and at graduation sites, DCPS has added information to the district's website to inform families of the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccination and where they can go to get the vaccines. In addition, the district is sending out robo-calls, developing resources to support schools in reaching out to their schools, and working with health partners to develop videos and resources to build community knowledge and confidence. In January and February, DCPS hosted vaccination sites for staff returning to in-person work and supported more than 2,500 DCPS staff in getting early vaccinations. The DCPS plan to support vaccinations can be found on the DCPS website: <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/vaccines/>.

Students with Disabilities

18. Provide the LEA's plans to provide appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities with respect to its health and safety policies and procedures.

DCPS is working proactively to ensure that the health of all of students is maintained. Existing COVID-19 health and safety protocol are adapted as needed to ensure students with disabilities are treated with respect and have necessary modifications. For example, if a student is not able to wear a mask all day related to a disability, there is a confidential mask waiver in place to accommodate this need. Additionally, schools are to limit parents/guardians entering the building during the arrival process, however, this will be allowed to support students with need. Existing supports and processes to ensure respect will remain in place to support this portion of our student population.

Training, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring

19. Please provide the LEA's plan to provide training and technical assistance on its policies and procedures to safely reopen schools in accordance with the DC Health Guidance for Schools and the OSSE Health and Safety Guidance for Schools, including:

- **a. who will receive training and technical assistance; while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. the topics that the training and technical assistance will address; and**
- **c. how and by whom the training and technical assistance will be delivered.**

During DCPS' July Summer Leadership Institute Training, members of the Office of School Improvements and Supports (OSIS) and the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) will provide training to Principals, Assistant Principals, LEAP Leaders, School Psychologists, and MTSS Leads on health, safety and operations. The training topics include: COVID-19 Schoolwide Set up & Operations, Processes for Students & Staff, COVID-19 School Health Guidance, and Student Learning and Services. During the training, attendees will receive several resources and tools. They will also receive a turn-key PowerPoint deck, which they will use in a train-the-trainer model to present to their staff during August. The turn-key deck will provide all health, safety and operations updates and will allow the school leader to tailor some content for their school community, I.e., detailing which entrances will be open for arrival, etc.

Additionally, during the Office of the Chief Operating Institute (OCOOi), all health and safety policies will be

reviewed. OCOOi is a training series for the operational designees at each school. Additional training topics included will be inventory management, transportation, reporting protocol, and other operations-specific topics.

20. Provide the LEA's plan to monitor the implementation of the health and safety plans at each campus, including how, when and by whom the implementation will be monitored, and how the LEA will respond if a given campus is not adhering to the plan.

The Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) Specialists conduct bi-weekly school walks at all schools to assess several pieces of compliance and building safety. Areas assessed include: daily health screening compliance, hygienic environment, face mask use, cleaning & disinfecting, HVAC, and COVID-19 case reporting. Each item has a point value associated with it, if a school has a low score, a corrective action process is followed. Regardless of score, all schools receive real-time coaching and support when areas of non-compliance are identified.

21. Describe the LEA's plans to communicate key health and safety policies and procedures to students, families, staff and visitors.

The Chancellor shared a communication with school communities on June 7 outlining DCPS School Year 2021-2022 health, safety, and operations commitments. These commitments were reviewed with school leadership during Principal Office Hours on June 7 and 10. Additional details on health, operations and safety policy for next school year was shared with Principals in a weekly principal communication on 6/25.

Onsite at schools, schools will continue to post health safety messaging to clearly communicate expectations on mask wearing, hand hygiene, and health screening.

School leaders are conducting building walks and tours through the summer months to reacclimate families and school communities to the space and to outline health and safety policy, including the following: entry procedures with hand sanitizer, mask and health screening, a review of cleaning procedures, and a review of the measures in place to ensure air quality.

The DCPS Communications team has been communicating key health and safety policies through district wide email campaigns, social media, earned media coverage and through our <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com>. Toolkits have been created to provide school leaders with consistent messaging to directly communicate to their families.